



### *Interim update from Olympia*

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Last week the governor signed the first state budget in four years that makes no cuts to K-12 or higher education, reflecting the priorities of Senate Democrats who drew a line in the sand and refused to cut education this year during intense and protracted budget negotiations.

From the time the last budget was approved in 2011 to the start of a special legislative session in November, revenue forecasts had dropped by \$1.7 billion. The solution to that challenge included the nearly half-billion-dollar early action package passed in December, improving caseload and revenue outlooks for the state, reductions to some state services, fund transfers and accounting changes, and some targeted revenue, such as equalizing taxes on roll-your-own cigarettes.

After the governor vetoed specific provisions of the budget, the state has a projected reserve of \$311 million.

The budget was carried in [HB 2127](#). You can find [more information here](#).

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## **Jobs package signed into law**

The state construction budget signed into law this week by the governor will fund local workforce development and infrastructure projects while creating an estimated 18,000 jobs statewide.

In addition to getting people on the job this year, the bipartisan capital budget supports investments that will drive long-term economic growth. For example, the largest part of the package focuses on workforce training, investing \$320 million in higher education facilities that will help Washingtonians qualify for high-demand

careers.

The bipartisan jobs package also focused on infrastructure that will drive private-sector job growth, investing in export-related projects, industrial site cleanup and preparation, economic development infrastructure such as water systems, and investments in Main Street downtown revitalization efforts.

The capital budget was tightly linked to a proposed amendment to the State Constitution that would gradually lower the state's debt limit. The amendment is based on the work of the Commission on State Debt.

The capital budget was included in two bills signed by the governor, [Senate Bill 5127](#) and [Senate Bill 6074](#). The proposed amendment to the State Constitution is [Senate Joint Resolution 8221](#). All three measures passed the Legislature with broad bipartisan support.

## E-newsletter ending for the year

Due to election-year restrictions, this will be our last e-newsletter for the year. I appreciate your interest in these varied issues related to the State Legislature that we've discussed in the e-newsletters in recent years.

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